VI. Tox Town

http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov

Tox Town is an environment health website designed to give you information on:

- everyday locations where you might find toxic chemicals
- non-technical descriptions of chemicals
- links to selected, authoritative chemical information on the Internet
- how the environment can impact human health
- Internet resources on environmental health topics

Tox Town uses color, graphics, sounds and animation to add interest to learning about connections between chemicals, the environment, and the public's health. Tox Town's target audience is students above elementary-school level, educators, and the general public. It is a companion to the extensive information in the TOXNET collection of databases that are typically used by toxicologists and health professionals.

Chemicals included in Tox Town meet the following criteria:

- Toxic (or perceived toxicity of interest to general public)
- Commonly encountered in the United States
- Known or expected to impact human health
- Of interest to federal agencies that regulate, research, or advise on a chemical's health effects. The Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry are examples of federal agencies concerned about toxic chemicals.

Chemicals or substances that are voluntarily ingested, such as drugs, dietary supplements, or caffeine, are not included.

Tox Town was created using Macromedia Flash. You must have Flash Player plug-in version 6 or above to view the site. The plug-in can be downloaded for free from Macromedia.

Tox Town will automatically detect whether or not you have the Flash Player and which version you have. If you do not have Flash Player version 6 or higher, Tox Town will connect you to the Macromedia web site where you can click "Download now" to install the Flash Player.

Using your browser's Back and Forward buttons can give confusing results. It's better to use the Tox Town's Close Window, Home, Return to Town buttons.
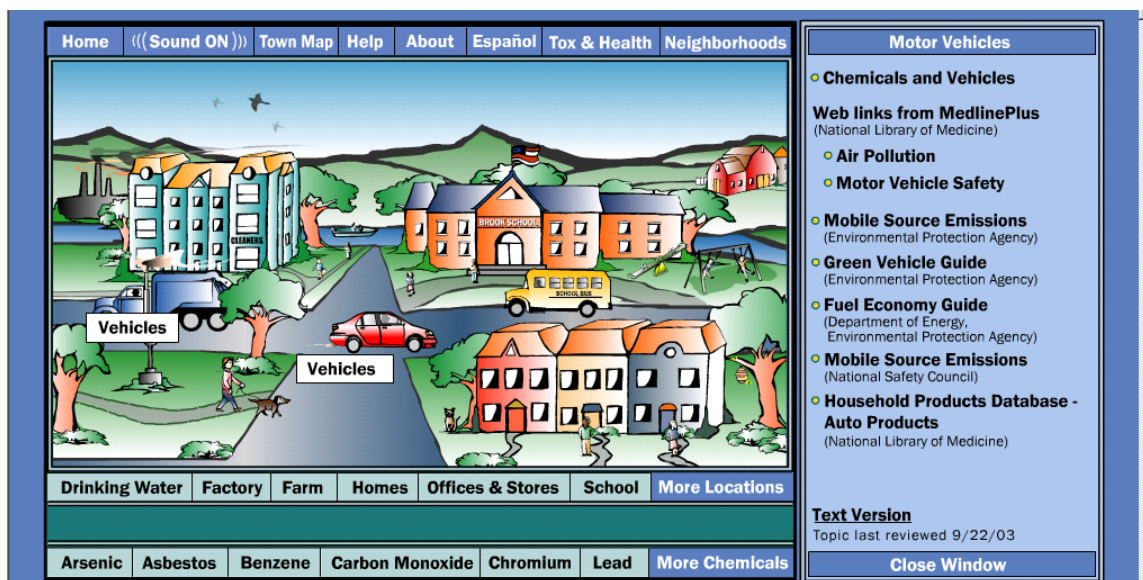
Neighborhoods

Currently there are only two neighborhoods in Tox Town: Town and City. Future neighborhoods are planned, such as Beach and Farm.
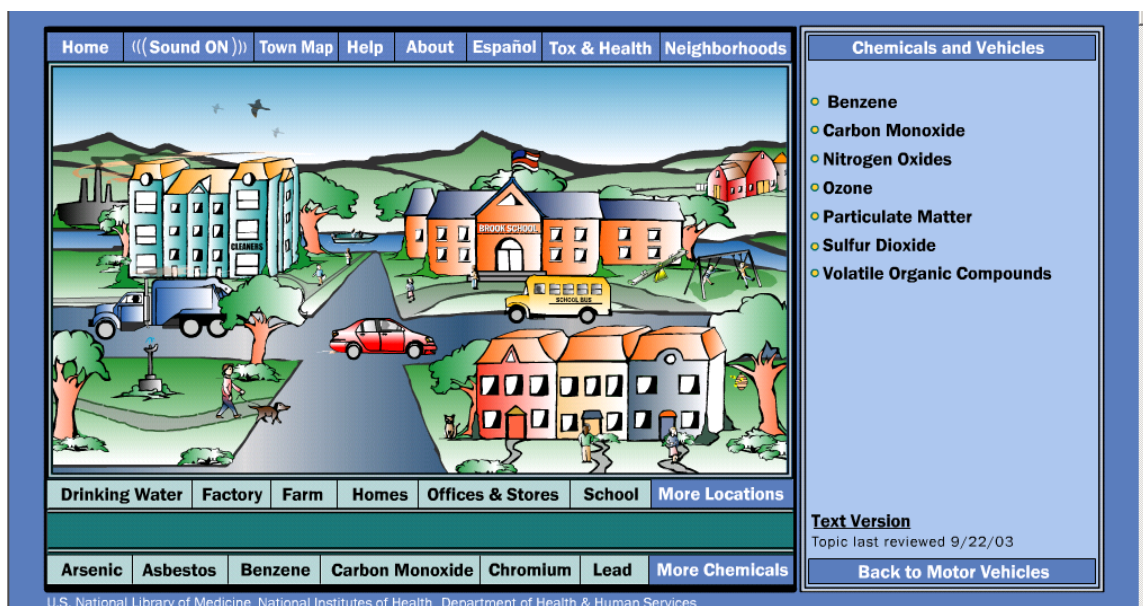
You can choose the neighborhood from the home screen or click on the word Neighborhood in the drop down menus at the top of the page to select Town or City.
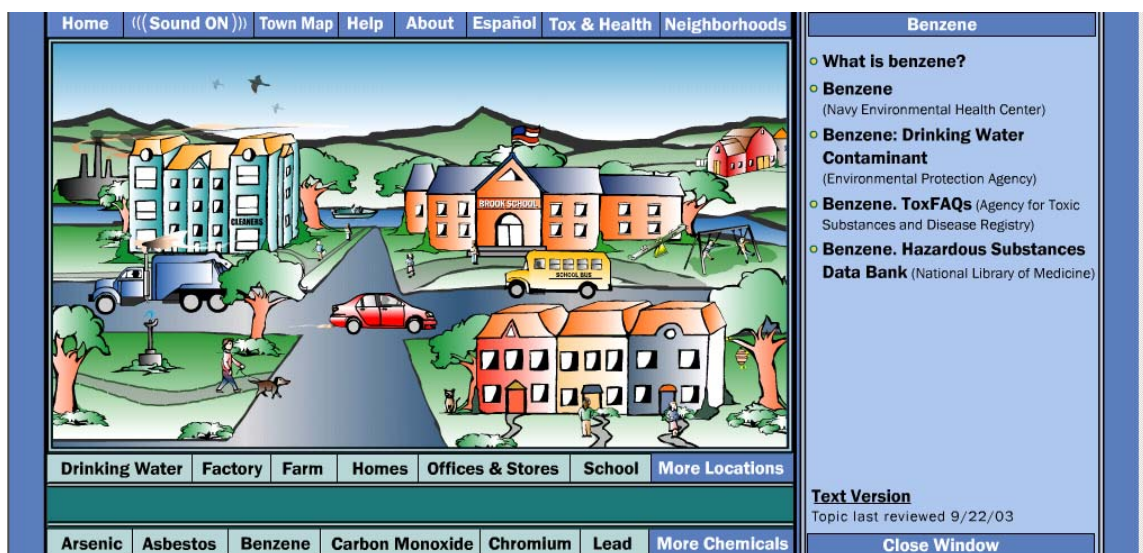
Locations

As you float your pointer over the images on the screen, windows showing their location categories ("vehicles" or "pets") appear in [tags] on the screens. Also, sounds will occur representing the different locations (meows, children laughing).

When you click on a location, the frame to the right brings up a list of topics having to do with that location. The first one is Chemicals.
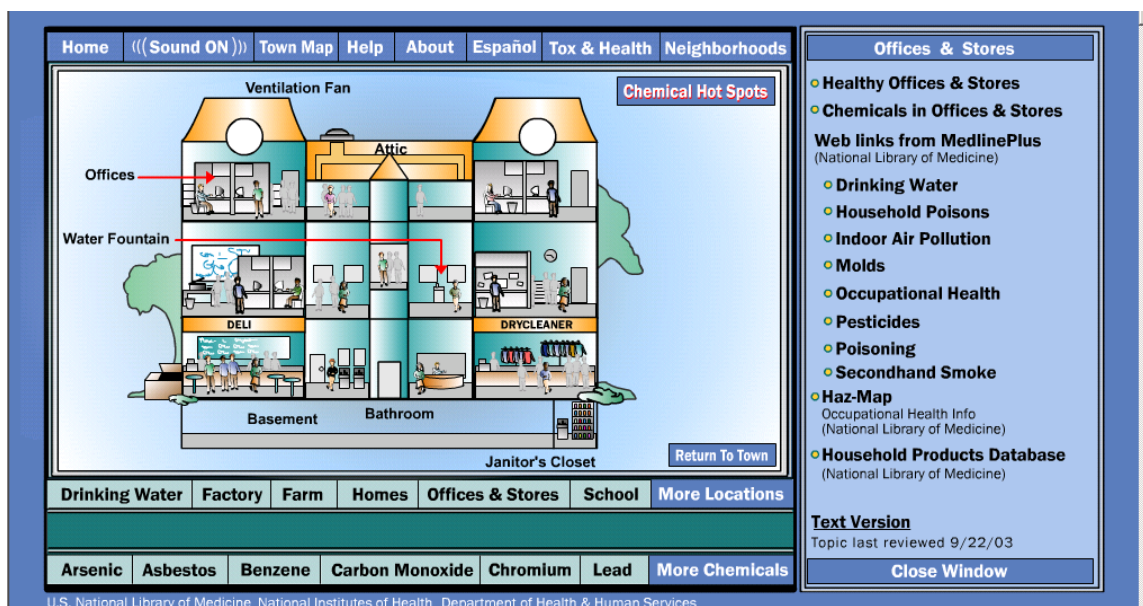

Clicking on a particular chemical will bring you a list of links about that chemical from different agencies.
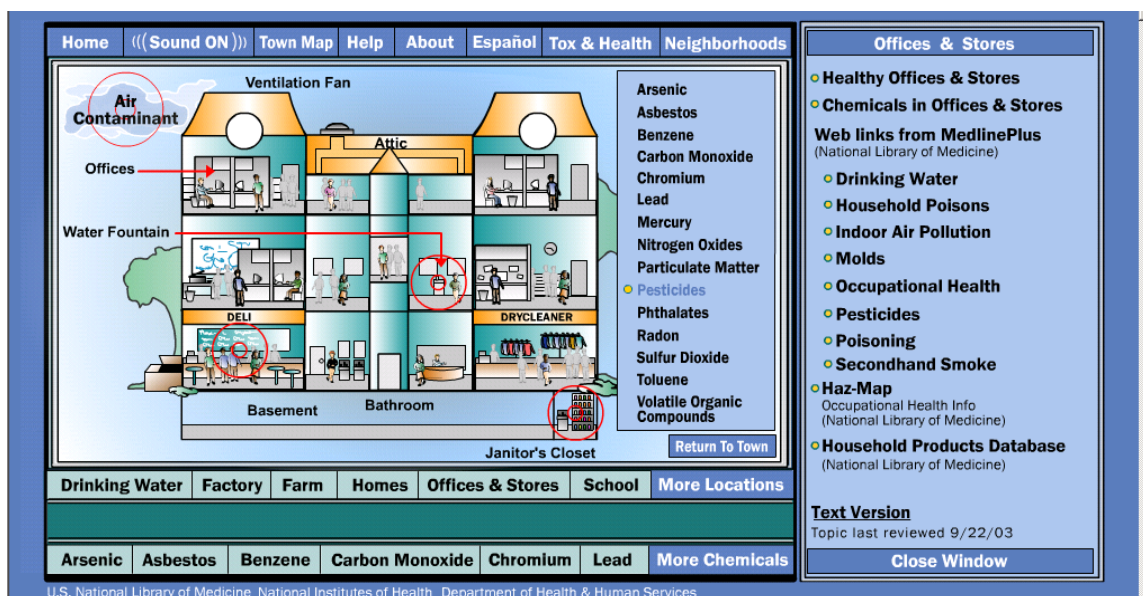

You can also search location by clicking on the locations listed at the bottom of the picture.

If you click on a large building, a section of that building will appear with the different functions in the building.
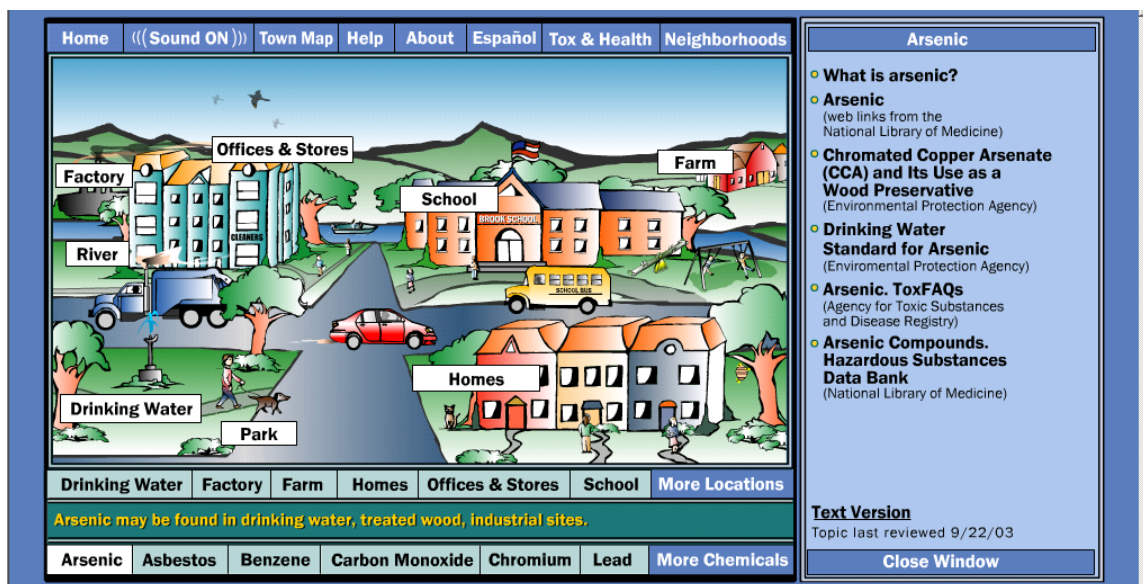

When you float your pointer over the "Chemical Hot Spots" button in the upper right corner, a list of potential chemicals drop down. Merely by floating the pointer over the chemicals, an image showing the chemical hotspots of that chemical will appear in the picture.
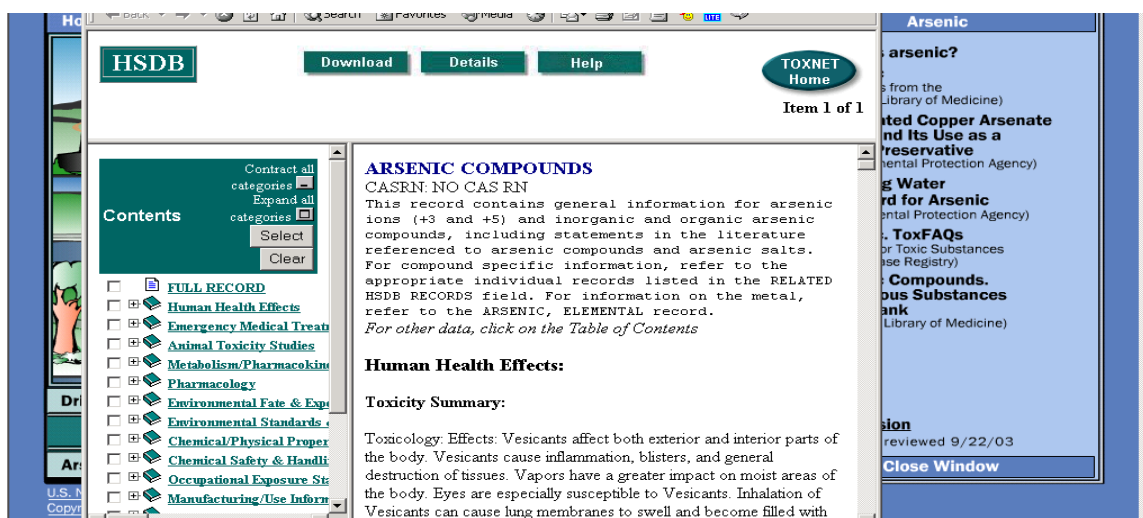
Chemicals

As you float your pointer over the chemicals listed at the bottom of the page, you will see [tags] light up over the locations where that chemical may be found.

Right above the word that you are pointing to is a teal box in which appears a short statement about where that chemical might be found.

Clicking on the chemical brings up the chemical information in the frame on the right side of the screen.

For chemical information in greater detail, clicking on the link to the Hazardous Substances Data Bank will bring up in-depth information about that chemical.
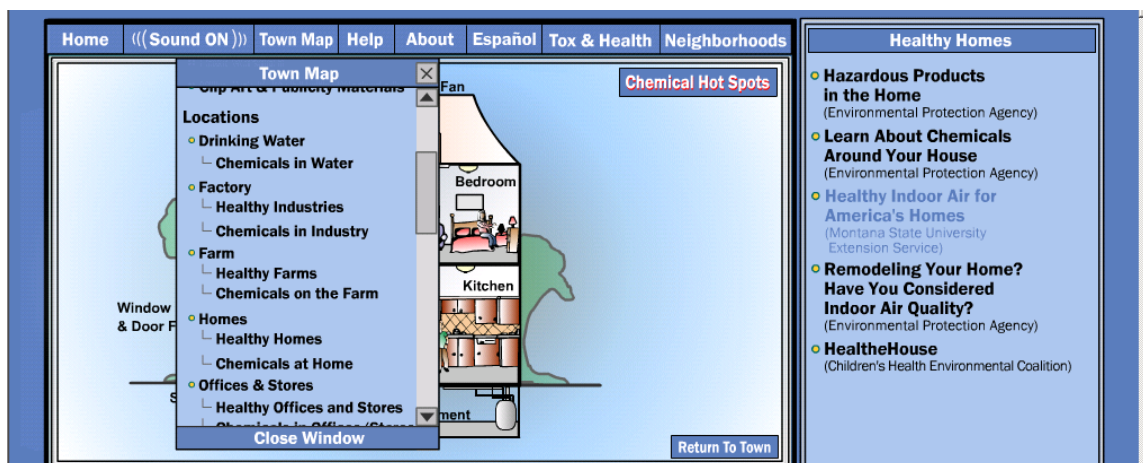

From this page you can also link to TOXNET.

Town Map

Clicking on Town Map in the drop down menu bar will bring up a menu of different kinds of information that you can find. For example, under Homes, you have the subcategory "Healthy Homes" and "Chemicals at Home." Clicking on Chemicals will bring you the chemical information that we have already seen in the right side.

Clicking on the words "Healthy Homes" brings up another set of information regarding different ways to make your home healthy.

Español

The Spanish site is not yet in graphic form. However, there is still a Spanish version of Tox Town, which links primarily to MedlinePlus pages on the various chemicals.

Tox and Health

Clicking on this link over the picture brings up a list of other NLM and NIH resources about Toxology and Environmental Health.

Practice Questions:

1. My son just caught some fish in the lake near our cabin, and I heard from a neighbor that the lake full of Pfiesteria. Is it safe to eat the fish?

2. My house was flooded last year, and I still have mold in my house that looks like it covers about 40 square feet. Do you have any information about how I can clean it up by myself?

3. For our Earth Day project, my science teacher wants me to do a project on brown fields in this area and what we can do to clean them up. What's wrong with a brown field?

4. Suggested solutions:

    1. Click on River, then select Pfiesteria infections. From the MedlinePlus page, choose *"What You Should Know about Pfiesteria Piscicida"* from National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

    2. Click on a building to open it up, and then on "molds" on the right side of the screen. Then choose "Dealing with Mold and Mildew in your Flood Damaged Home" from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

    3. Go to City, and click on Brownsfield in the Location bar.   There is lots of information on what they are and how to clean them up.